

PR  
2992  
W4  
H89+





**Cornell University Library**

**Ithaca, New York**

---

BOUGHT WITH THE INCOME OF THE  
**SAGE ENDOWMENT FUND**

THE GIFT OF  
**HENRY W. SAGE**

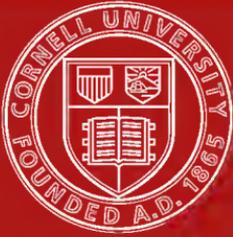
1891

Cornell University Library  
**PR 2992.W4H89**

**Shakespeare and his Welsh characters,**



3 1924 013 360 809 olin.



## Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in  
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in  
the United States on the use of the text.

THE SHAKESPEARE ASSOCIATION.  
Papers. III

SHAKESPEARE AND HIS  
WELSH CHARACTERS.

BY  
ARTHUR E. HUGHES, B.A.,  
Barrister-at-Law.

REPRINTED FOR THE SHAKESPEARE ASSOCIATION  
FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE HONOURABLE SOCIETY OF  
CYMMRODORION.



SHAKESPEARE AND HIS  
WELSH CHARACTERS,

BY THE LATE

ARTHUR E. HUGHES,

Read at a Joint Meeting of the Honourable  
Society of Cymmrodorion and the Shakes-  
peare Association at a Meeting held at King's  
College, on May 24th, 1918.

DEVIZES :

PRINTED BY GEORGE SIMPSON & CO., DEVIZES, LIMITED.

# SHAKESPEARE AND HIS WELSH CHARACTERS.<sup>1</sup>

BY THE LATE ARTHUR E. HUGHES, B.A.,

*Barrister-at-Law.*

---

## INTRODUCTION.

WHEN Pope said, "The proper study of mankind is man", he merely repeated the most hackneyed philosophical dictum the world has known. He was considering, as he tells us, that uninteresting work of the imagination, Man in the abstract, whose most outstanding characteristic is his lack of human nature. Shakespeare shows no interest in man in the abstract, and he never appears to be consciously didactic; although for our knowledge of human nature we are more indebted to him than to all ethical writers from Aristotle to Mr. Wells. He is, rather, the greatest student of the individual, and his method is inductive. Battles, the fall of dynasties, the uprising of peoples, the social pageantry of life and, even, the mystery of death are to him but as the waves on the tide of human nature, which buoy up or engulf the individual.

Shakespeare sees this concrete living being everywhere; in the Chronicles, in old plays, in song books, at Court, and in camp, in his own heart and brain. It is never an abstraction but a tangible visible striving organism, as necessary for the existence of his stage world as any

<sup>1</sup> Read at a Joint Meeting of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion and the Shakespeare Association, held at King's College, Strand, on Friday, May 24th, 1918. Chairman, Sir E. Vincent Evans, F.S.A.

planet for the existence of our universe. Hence the problems of character-contrast with which his critics are so much concerned. He knew all things were relative, and you cannot isolate one character from another.

The moment, however, we begin to consider one character in relation to another and to discover Shakespeare's intention and true conceptions, we cannot advance without agreeing upon some definite canons or principles of criticism. Now it is a generally accepted principle of Shakespearean criticism that his characters are always consistent. This means that their thoughts and conduct are always true to their essential natures, as modified, without breach of continuity, by the progress of time and circumstance. This assumption is made by all his critics. Pope says: "Every single character in Shakespeare is as much an individual as those in life itself". Schlegel tells us that his characters "possess such truth that when (they are) deformed monsters like Caliban, he extorts the conviction that if there should be such beings they would so conduct themselves". And Coleridge says: "This unity of feeling and character pervades every drama of Shakespeare" and "he shows us the life and principle of each being with organic regularity".

Then we have another universally accepted canon of Shakespearean criticism, viz., that this consistency of character was the result of a definite intention. As Coleridge explains: "He never wrote at random, or hit upon points of character and conduct by chance; and the smallest fragment of his mind, not infrequently gives a clue to a most perfect, regular, and consistent whole."

Now, these assumptions of definite intention and consistency are, doubtless, almost universally justified; but applied, as they have been indiscriminately, they have in my opinion led to error. To assume that Shakespeare

started to write a play with a definite and clear conception of a character is one thing; to assume that this vision was immutable throughout the whole course of its execution is another. It implies that he was impervious to fresh impressions and fuller light, and when united with the assumption of consistency, it involves a claim to infallibility.

I am purposely accentuating these general canons of criticism because in my treatment of Glendower, and in some measure of Fluellen, I find it necessary to attack the supposed universality of Shakespeare's consistency, and I have no wish to evade any difficulty that may present itself.

In putting these canons of criticism to the test there is only one method which may safely be applied. We must listen to all that Shakespeare says about a character, and refuse to be satisfied with general impressions. We must refrain from relying upon popular or stage tradition. To justify this caution it is only necessary to refer to the usual stage misrepresentation of Iago, and the former persistent and general conviction that Falstaff was a coward. We owe the removal of this last misconception to the Welshman Maurice Morgann, whose work, so long neglected, is now admitted (as Swinburne has confirmed), to be one of the most brilliant pieces of Shakespearean criticism ever written. Morgann did not formulate his method, but it is the one I have indicated. We must determine Shakespeare's conceptions from all that he says of a character, not from a part; remembering Schlegel's warning that his characters are almost "too nice and delicate for the stage, and can only be understood by a very acute audience".

These considerations will I trust, enable me to be assured of indulgence if I should appear to labour unduly upon

the foundations upon which I hope to establish a new view of Shakespeare's conception of the character of Glendower. I ask this the more confidently because his Welsh characters have received but scant attention from the critics. Hazlitt only tells us that Glendower is a masterly character, bold, original, intelligible, and thoroughly natural—and there is but little of this true. Schlegel, Coleridge, Watkiss Lloyd, and indeed all writers known to me, are equally trite and meagre in their comments. Perhaps Shakespeare's Welsh characters are too nice and delicate to be fully appreciated by anyone not a Welshman. But in spite of the vice of a little Welsh vanity, I hope to show that his Welsh characters deserve a good deal more attention from English students than they have hitherto received.

#### GLENDOWER.

The three plays in which the Welsh characters appear were written within a period of three years, 1596-1599; and as during this period Shakespeare wrote seven plays, it is natural they should betray some marks of haste and want of revision. But, apart from trivial literary imperfections and historical inaccuracies—oftener the note of genius than otherwise—his treatment of the character of Glendower in the First Part of *King Henry IV* shows a remarkable inconsistency. There are clear indications that his conception of the Welshman's character suffered a radical change when he was writing the play.

On our first introduction to any of Shakespeare's characters we see them as living men and women, full-grown and strongly individualised. Their idiosyncrasies are fixed only to be modified under the influence of time and circumstance. There is no breach of character continuity; we seldom have to say, "this character is not

what, at first, we conceived it to be". Shakespeare draws them with the first few strokes of his brush; the rest is added colouring, higher lights, and deeper shadows, but the first firm outline remains, without blur or inconsistent excrescence to jar upon our sense of truth and reality.

Glendower, however, is a strange exception and is, in this respect, unique. But to understand Shakespeare's point of view when he first imagined the Glendower scene in the First Part of *King Henry IV*, we must understand his attitude of mind towards the Welsh before he started to portray Glendower. When he began to write this play he had no affection for the Welsh as a nation, nor had he any sympathy with or respect for Glendower. I do not believe he had any knowledge of Welsh history, or of the fact that the nation had any literary culture, and I do not think he had any knowledge of the Welsh character. In *King Richard II*, written before *1 Henry IV*, we have a Welsh captain who speaks about a dozen lines. He is addressed by Salisbury as 'thou trusty Welshman', but Salisbury's relations with the Welsh captain were diplomatic. He was intent upon retaining him and his Welsh forces in their allegiance to Richard. Later on in the play the Welsh are erroneously described by Shakespeare as ready to worship the rising sun of Bolingbroke :

"For all the Welshmen, hearing thou wert dead,  
"Are gone to Bolingbroke, dispersed and fled."

This is, however, what they did *not* do. We also find (Act III, s. 1) Bolingbroke saying :

"Come, lords, away,  
"To fight with Glendower and his complices".

but it was not until Bolingbroke had gained the throne, when Glendower's quarrel with Lord Grey of Ruthin had become acute, and the Percies had rebelled, that Boling-

broke had to take up arms against a Welsh rebellion led by Glendower. This last reference to Glendower is so glaringly inaccurate that Theobald omitted the line, thinking that the rhyme of the lines showed it ought not to be there, but Johnson and Stevens remark that there is no authority for such a treatment of the line, and that it is not the sort of line that would be introduced by another writer. From these meagre and inaccurate references to the Welsh in *Richard II* we can come to no conclusion as to Shakespeare's attitude towards the nation. He probably looked upon Welshmen as superstitious, and firm believers in prophecy. This was the hackneyed theme of English chroniclers, and Shakespeare adopted in this respect the commonplace and popular English view as given in Holinshed and Hall. The Welsh Captain's short speech indicates this:

“The bay-trees in our country are all wither'd,  
“And meteors fright the fixed stars of heaven;  
“And pale-faced moon looks bloody on the earth,  
“And lean-look'd prophets whisper fearful change.”

Shakespeare is guilty of a mild botanical heresy in suggesting that bay-trees were common in Wales in *Richard II*'s day. This reference to bay trees is from a statement in Holinshed, who, however, speaks of bay trees in England, and not in Wales. From this play, therefore, we may safely assume, that when he wrote it, Shakespeare's knowledge of the Welsh and their history was not more extensive or accurate than that of the ordinary Englishman of his time.

It has been suggested that Shakespeare's insight into the Welsh character, which he undoubtedly shows when dealing with Sir Hugh Evans and Fluellen, was due to an acquaintance with Welshmen at Stratford-on-Avon in his youth. The master of the Grammar School at Stratford

in the years 1577-9 was a Thomas Jenkins. He was a fellow of his College. At a later date, John Owen the Epigrammatist was master of Warwick Grammar School, but this was after Shakespeare had left Stratford for London. Shakespeare of course may have been Jenkins' pupil, although, owing to John Shakespeare's very straitened circumstances about this time, many have doubted whether his son William could have been kept at school later than the year 1577.

The Stratford Parish Registers also show that there were families having Welsh names living there and in the neighbourhood, and as Warwickshire was not so very far from the Welsh Marches it has been thought that Shakespeare had the means of learning much about the Welsh and their history. But this is mere surmise. Shropshire is to-day on the Welsh border, but if you desire to enjoy association with undistilled ignorance of Welsh and Welsh literature, Shropshire will give you all you desire, in spite of the many Jones', Evans' and Jenkins's to be found there. The schoolmasters at Stratford and Warwick were scholars, and it is idle vanity to suggest that Sir Hugh Evans can be identified with either of them. I have been unable to discover any evidence to enable us to credit Shakespeare with having studied the Celtic fringe in his youth. It is safer to rely upon the evidence afforded by his plays for any conclusions upon this question, and I proceed to deal with the play of *1 Henry IV*.

#### GLENDOWER (*1 Henry IV*).

Glendower does not appear until the play is fully developed. He is seen at the opening of the third act, and is introduced primarily because he is necessary for the true historical setting of the play. The personality of the

Welshman hung like a thundercloud over the whole reign of Henry Bolingbroke. At the beginning of the play the king speaks of him as "that great magician, damn'd Glendower", and says that Mortimer "durst as well have met the devil alone as Owen Glendower for an enemy". At the end of the play Henry has still to take his son with him "towards Wales to fight with Glendower". Even in the next play, the Second Part of *Henry IV*, Glendower still dogs Bolingbroke's uneasy course. He still has "the Welsh baying him at the heels", and it is not until his end approaches that he is comforted with "a certain instance that Glendower is dead". In this matter, however, Shakespeare was inaccurate, for Glendower outlived Bolingbroke into the reign of his son.

If, therefore, Shakespeare had been minded to make a heroic character of Glendower, the part played by him in Bolingbroke's reign would have justified such a treatment, and no historical perspective would have been violated if Glendower had been a principal figure instead of a subsidiary one. But Shakespeare was a playwright. Glendower had foiled all the King's, and Prince Henry's efforts to conquer him, and any accentuation of Glendower's heroism would necessarily detract from the glory of Shakespeare's hero, Prince Henry. Shakespeare understood, as only the Greek dramatists did, the importance of dramatic intensity. He allows nothing to detract from the action that eventually leads to the glory of the Prince's victory over Hotspur, of intellect over brute force and courage.

It is beside my present purpose to deal with the character contrast between the Prince and Hotspur; but a few words must be said about the latter, because he is brought into such close connection with Glendower, and helps us to grasp Shakespeare's meaning in the Glendower

scene. Hotspur is the man of action, fiery and impulsive, who loves fighting because it is the only thing that makes his whole nature pulsate harmoniously—the English Philistine at his best.

He is of the type of the old Welsh warriors of the Gododin :

Gwrhyt arderchawc varchawg mysgi  
Rudedel ryuel a eiduni.<sup>1</sup>

The man of glorious valour, lord of strife,  
Who longed for the red harvest of war.

His wife hears him in his sleep “murmur tales of iron wars”: awake, he has no other interest :

“O, let the hours be short  
“Till fields and blows applaud our sport!”

When he goes forth to meet his fate at Shrewsbury his own words are :

“Doomsday is near; die all, die merrily”.

It is with such a man that Shakespeare contrasts Glendower. And this is done in a scene which, for its wonderful revelation of Shakespeare at work as a playwright, has no counterpart in the whole of his plays.

You will follow the facts the more readily as I marshal them, if I state now the conclusion at which I have arrived. It is that Shakespeare started with one conception of Glendower as a character contrast to Hotspur, but afterwards discovered that his conception was quite wrong. He then suddenly constructed an entirely different character, and maintains this to the end of the scene and of the play. Further, in order to neutralise the effect of this glaring inconsistency, he shows such wonderful stagecraft that its existence is almost veiled from the audience.

For the sake of clearness I shall call the first conception

<sup>1</sup> Stephens' *Gododin*, p. 292. Cymmrodorion Edition (1888).

the English Glendower, and the second the Welsh Glendower.

As I have pointed out Shakespeare was driven to introduce Glendower into *1 Henry IV*, to create a right historical setting. This necessitated recourse to some authority for his material, as his purpose would be thwarted unless Glendower were presented with features that could be recognised by his audience as satisfying their ideas of his personality. The popular view among Englishmen was that presented by the English chroniclers, and for those of Elizabeth's day, by Holinshed more particularly. Shakespeare had every inducement to present a recognisable Glendower; and this he has done with almost punctilious adherence to his authorities in the case of the English Glendower, and with a studied aim to satisfy the common aversion and contempt for the Welshman, shown by English writers of an earlier day.

In the first scene of the play he writes thus :

“ . . . the noble Mortimer,  
 Leading the men of Herefordshire to fight  
 Against the irregular and wild Glendower,  
 Was by the rude hands of that Welshman taken;  
 A thousand of his people butchered,  
 Upon whose dead corpse there was such misuse,  
 Such beastly shameless transformation,  
 By those Welshwomen done, as may not be,  
 Without much shame retold or spoken of.”

Now this is merely Holinshed turned into blank verse. Holinshed writes :

“The shamefull villanie used by the Welshwomen towards the dead carcasses, was such as honest eares would be ashamed to heare and continent toongs to speak thereof.”

The rest of the passage is practically a bald transcript from Holinshed. It is not even tolerable poetry, and Shakespeare is at such little pains to be accurate in his facts that he follows Holinshed in making the mistake of

calling Edmund Mortimer the Earl of March. Why was this cruel passage used by him? Because it had been the popular view of Glendower and his fellow rebels. A real sting was intended by this reference to the conduct of Welshwomen at the battle of Pilleth, and this gross calumny can be traced back through the Chronicles until one finds its origin in those of St. Alban's,<sup>1</sup> where it is stated with a foul and horrid particularity. That it is a calumny is certain from the ridiculous absurdity of the allegations, even were there not a complete absence of any such accusation in the official documents and correspondence of the time. This alleged inhumanity of Welshwomen has no bearing upon the action of the play nor any relation to any character other than Glendower. The object of its introduction must have been to create a contempt for him and his cause, and to prevent the audience feeling any sympathy for him when he appeared on the stage.

But Shakespeare did not rest content with Holinshed and Hall. There was another work dealing with Glendower which he read before he created the English Glendower. This was the verse description of Glendower written by Thomas Phaer—a Pembrokehire man, and Queen Mary's Solicitor-General attending the Council of the Marches. He was an Oxford and Lincoln's Inn man, and is known for his translation of Vergil. His verses appeared in Baldwin's *A Myrroure for Magistrates*, first published in 1559. We know Shakespeare had read this work on Glendower because Hotspur says of Glendower:

“I cannot choose: sometime he angers me  
With telling me of the moldwarp and the ant,  
Of the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies.”

And in this speech Hotspur also refers to the dragon and a couching lion.

<sup>1</sup> *Historia Anglicana*, Walsingham, Edited by Riley, vol. ii, p. 250.

This is clearly reminiscent of these lines of Phaer's:

“ And loke on me to be the Prince of Wales  
 Entiste thereto by many of Merline's tales  
 . . . . .  
 Affirming Henry to be Gogmagog  
 Whom *Merlyn* doth a *Mouldwarp* ever call  
 Accurst of God, that must be brought to thrall  
 By a *Wolf*, a *Dragon*, and a *Lyon* strong  
 Which should deuide his kingdome them among.”

The book is a collection of poems intended to warn persons in power how the wicked and reckless meet with just punishment. Most of these verse biographies were written by William Baldwin, but the account of Glendower is by Phaer.

Phaer's work is full of contempt for Welsh superstition, and for Glendower. He makes Glendower out to be full of vanity and a braggart, making him claim to be

“ Taken in my country for a very God ; ”

and to show his contempt further he declares that hunger made Glendower “ eat both gravell, durt and mud ”.

Such being Shakespeare's authorities for his portrait of the English Glendower, it is only natural that in his references to Glendower in the first two Acts of *1 Henry IV*, he shows no sign of having advanced one step beyond Holinshed's and Phaer's conception of Glendower. He is “ that great magician, damn'd Glendower ”, the “ irregular and wild Glendower ”, the man whose hands were “ rude ”, that is cruel. When Hotspur intercedes with the King on behalf of Mortimer, the King answers, “ He durst as well have met the devil alone, as Owen Glendower for an enemy ”. Falstaff in Act II, does not mince his words;

“ He of Wales that gave Amamon the bastinado, and made Lucifer cuckold, and swore the devil his true liegeman upon the cross of a Welsh hook—what a plague call you him ? ”

Here you see Shakespeare making Falstaff show *his* contempt by pretending to have forgotten Glendower's name. Well, in a curious parallel, when Shakespeare had modified his opinion of the Welsh very greatly we find Fluellen, in *Henry V*, indicating his contempt for Falstaff by saying he had forgotten great Jack Falstaff's name.

Up to the end of the second Act, Shakespeare therefore has given us the English Glendower. He has written to satisfy the Elizabethan play-goer's conception of the man. The Welsh stand forward as culprits, guilty of a foul crime against Herefordshire men. Shakespeare has used his art to prevent us respecting Glendower, and the gibe from the mouth of Falstaff are words to prepare the audience for the figure to be introduced in the very next scene.

Such being the English Glendower, and such being his nation's crime, the natural dramatic sequence is retribution. On the stage the greatest punishment which a dramatist inflicts upon a character is not death—often the fate of the noble unfortunate—but ridicule.

And this is the fate meted out to Glendower in Act III. Shakespeare proceeds to scorch him with ridicule, and to make him the laughing stock of the audience. In reading this famous scene we see the contrast between the impetuous outspoken blunt Hotspur, and the superstitious, boastful, self-deceiving, spirit-driven Glendower; the one forced headlong by the moods of his own fiery nature, the other a prey to the spirits of the land of dreams, out of which old Geoffrey of Monmouth brought Merlin and all his prophecies. For the purpose of stage effect, in order to provide a contrast to Hotspur's character, Shakespeare had only two alternatives. Hotspur was the plain blunt brave warrior, but coarse in fibre and feeling, unintellectual and over-bearing. The contrast to this is, either,

a man of dreams, superstitious, showing himself as a frothy, garrulous braggart, or, as an alternative, a refined, intellectual, and sensitive gentleman. Shakespeare chose the first alternative and made Glendower a butt for the ridicule and contempt of his audience.

I believe the English Glendower to be the only character in Shakespeare whose superstition is made the direct vehicle of ridicule. Elsewhere, as in *Macbeth* and *Julius Cæsar*, superstition is used to deepen the tragic element in his plays, and to accentuate the fatal insistence of impending doom.

The evidence therefore seems conclusive that Shakespeare's intention up to this point was to give us such a character as he had found in his authorities—the conception that would be recognised by his audience—a figure fit for gibes and mocks and humorous ridicule, and for little else. His Glendower discloses no pride of race or patriotism. He is a Welshman only in name.

If this scene had followed a natural development with Hotspur and Glendower in contrast as its main feature, then, cudgelling or some moral equivalent would undoubtedly have followed. But it is a remarkable fact that from this point onward, although Hotspur does not leave the stage, he speaks no word to Glendower nor does Glendower address him. The explanation of this is not the self-restraint of Hotspur, as Watkiss Lloyd suggests, for Hotspur had none, but a far more interesting and subtle reason. At this point something strange happened. Of that there can be no doubt, and I now suggest what it was, leaving others to judge if I have seen aright.

Conceive that at this point Shakespeare went to an intelligent Welshman, an actor or a literary man, to discuss what was possible in the form of Welsh colouring, a Welsh song or Welsh speeches—the following part of

the scene shows he must have done this—and reading to him what he had so far written, what would the Welshman say? He would say, “This is most excellent fooling; but it is not Glendower. It is not even caricature, and no Welshman will recognise him even as the ghost of Glendower.” Would not Shakespeare ask, “What, then, was Glendower like?”

Now this, doubtless, seems a fanciful theory, but I believe I am going to establish it. How shall we test it? In this way. I shall show that he required the assistance of a Welsh boy actor for the scene, and that the actor who took the part of Glendower almost certainly spoke Welsh. I shall show as shortly as possible Glendower in his true character as he was known to Welshmen, and it will then be seen that Shakespeare describes the real Glendower in clear cut detail, and that from this point forward he never turns his eyes upon the former wild travesty of the man, but gives us the real Welsh Glendower without a trace of mockery or ridicule to ruffle the soul of the most sensitive Welshman.

#### SECOND PART OF GLENDOWER SCENE.

The remainder of the Glendower scene has no relation to the action of the play, nor is it required for the purpose of developing the character or character-contrast of any persons concerned in subsequent events. Its object is to impress upon us the real human personalities of Glendower and his daughter, and to stress the fact that they are Welsh in sentiment and language. The stage directions of the scene given in the Folio are identical with those in the first Quarto, which was published only some few months after the production of the play. These stage directions therefore give us the scene imagined by Shakespeare. Now from the stage directions we find that Glendower

speaks to his daughter in Welsh. She speaks in Welsh on four different occasions, and she sings a Welsh song. Further, in a speech of nine lines long, Glendower translates into English what his daughter had spoken in Welsh. This scene, therefore, could not be realistic or satisfy a playwright's feeling for his art, unless, at least, one speech of the lady had been of the same length.

Now, were these speeches of Glendower and his daughter genuine Welsh, or mere stage patter and make believe? It is remarkable that in other plays of the period we have complete sentences and occasionally even long dialogues in Welsh. *The Patient Grissill* (1599) by Chettle, Dekker and Houghton; *For the Honour of Wales*, by Ben Jonson, and *Northward Hoe* (1601), by Dekker and Webster, are instances in point. In the first named play we have this dialogue:

*Sir Owen*: Attolwg chwi, byddwch yn llonydd, er mwyn Duw, Gwenllian.

*Gwenllian*: Na fyddaf yn llonydd, gwna waetha gelli di.

*Sir Owen*: Myn Duw! Mi gnoeia dy hen yn wmbreth pob dydd a phob nos.

. . . . .

*Gwenllian*: Yn herio i? Mi grafaf dy lygaid di allan oth ben di a tro oddiyma o'n nigter.

and Ben Jonson gives us

*Griffith*: Taw di'r ynfyd ydwy't ti'n abli anafu pob peth a'th ffolineb ag i dynny gwatwar ar dy wlad.

*Jenkins*: Gad fi'n llonydd. I say I will appear in Court.

and in *Northward Hoe* we have "Mi caraf chwi yn nghalon."<sup>1</sup>

This Welsh was introduced, doubtless, to increase the realism of the plays; but it must have been also intended for the purpose of being understood by any Welshmen in

<sup>1</sup> The spelling and the construction is very inaccurate judged by a modern standard, but some of the inaccuracies are, doubtless, due to printers' mistakes.

the audience, and this would not be possible unless the actor knew some Welsh. Further, there were, if we judge from their names, several Welsh actors in London at this very time. John Jones was acting a girl's part in 1596; Daniell Jones was acting boys' parts in William Kemp's Company in 1586; Samuel Daniel and Henry Evans were acting at Court in February 1604-5, and a few years later we have a James Jones a London actor. Richard Price is mentioned as a player in a patent of 1613. Henry Evans was connected with Blackfriars Theatre from 1597, and we find Burbidge taking over his interest in the lease in August 1608. Richard Jones was another actor mentioned in the lists of players at the time when Shakespeare was writing his Henry plays. This Welshman incidentally shows us that actors were then very much what they are now—improvident. There is extant a letter written by him in 1592 to Edward Alleyn asking for money to enable him to take his clothes out of pawn. In the list of players given in the first Folio two actors are named who may have been Welshmen, John Rice and Robert Goughe. No trace of the first name has been found in London parish registers, and little is known of either. Goughe apparently acted female parts.

In this connection James Roberts, the London-Welsh printer, must be mentioned. He printed the first Quarto edition of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1600, and this has the Welsh proverb *Heb Ddieu Heb Ddim* on the title page. These Welsh words also appear on the title page of the Nathaniel Butler *King Lear* Quarto of 1608, and on that of the play of Sir John Oldcastle in 1600 which has Shakespeare's name on the title page. This was however a false claim made by the printers as this play was written by Drayton and others.

In addition to actors, London, at this period was well furnished with Welshmen capable of assisting any playwright with information about Welsh history and Welsh life and culture. Drayton who wrote a play entitled *Owen Tudor* (which I have not been able to find), in the preface to his *Polyolbion* acknowledges his great indebtedness to John Williams for information about Welsh antiquities. But instead of merely enumerating names it will be more interesting to hear what Ben Jonson says about the Welsh in London at this time :

“A very garden and seed plot of honest minds and men : what lights of learning hath Wales sent forth for your schools ? What industrious students of your laws ? What able ministers of your justice ? Whence hath the crown in all times better servitors ? More liberal in their lives and fortunes ?”

So, if Shakespeare had the slightest desire to make a Welsh character true to nature—and he must have had—the means were at hand. Nay, they would be thrust upon him, for he must have elbowed Welshmen in the street and in the theatre. There were too many Welshmen in London to tolerate mock gibberish upon the stage in lieu of genuine Welsh, and we may safely assume that when these contemporaneous stage directions tell us that Glendower and his daughter spoke Welsh in these earliest representations of the play, it was a fact.

What then would be the information that a Welshman would give Shakespeare about Glendower and his daughter ? If we can ascertain this we can find out from the rest of the scenes whether he profited by his instruction.

The first thing he might be told would be that Glendower was a gentleman, not a self-centred, half-witted, ridiculous, boasting braggart. We are fortunate in possessing the clearest contemporary evidence of the character of Glendower given by his friend and neigh-

bour, Iolo Goch. Iolo was no mere *bardd teulu*, or household bard. He was a landed proprietor, a country gentleman, who wrote a poem about Glendower when he lived a peaceful country life before the rebellion. He describes him as possessing every attribute of a man we and Shakespeare would call a gentleman. He was generous to the aged, he was the noble patron of the *Clér*, or travelling troubadours. His home was the haven of bards, *buarth y beirdd*. Iolo says he has no peer in the whole of Wales; and at the close of his ode Iolo writes:

Ni bydd eisieu budd oseb  
Na gwall na newyn na gwarth  
Na syched fyth yn Sycharth.

Of bounteous gifts you find no dearth  
But plenty cheer and noble worth  
Greet all who enter Sycharth.

He also speaks of him as being *cyweithgael coeth*, of refined affability, a subtle touch of character which we shall meet again. Glendower is also *llidiog wrth wjŕ a llediaith*, a hater of men of uncouth vulgar speech. The word does not I think mean merely an English accent. In fact he was in Iolo's eyes pre-eminently a cultured gentleman.

Then, again, he was a man of learning. His Latin letter to Charles VI of France, written in 1406, urges the king to obtain for him the Pope's sanction to establish two universities in Wales. And this in the very midst of his rebellion when Wales was wrestling with the might of England. In this letter he not only advocates the separation of the Welsh Church from the jurisdiction of Canterbury, with an Archbishopric at St. David's, but also appeals that Welsh speaking clergy should be appointed, from Archbishop down to Curates. It was only through

the clergy that the peasantry could in those days be educated and be made more civilised, and in Wales this could only be done by clergy who knew the Welsh language. Iolo's description of his home with its refinements, and its chapel, are only consistent with a high degree of culture and education in its owner.

Shakespeare, as I have already mentioned, knew that Glendower had been trained at the English court, and Holinshed states he was a barrister; but it was only a man of real learning and an enthusiast for education who, in the midst of constant anxieties, and in the vortex of civil strife and active fighting, could accentuate the importance of establishing seats of learning in Wales at such a time.

Now these features in his character, and they are all of them non-dramatic from the standpoint of Shakespeare's first conception of Glendower, as indicated in the earlier part of this scene (Act III, Sc. 1), were not to be found in any English authority available to him. On the other hand, they represent the real Glendower, and would, on our assumption, have been the very qualities which our Welshman would have insisted upon, as showing what manner of man the real Glendower was.

One can, however, conceive Shakespeare asking our countryman: "But what about all this suggestion of magic and portents in connection with him?" The answer would have been this: "There *was* something strange about the man." Iolo felt that. The Welsh thought he was the son of prophecy (*mab darogan*) whose coming had been foretold. We know from historical records that there was also a strange light in the sky—a comet, or some Northern lights—in the early days of his insurrection, which Iolo thus describes:

“ Uchel y mae uwch law Mon  
 Yngolwg yr angylion  
 Piler o aur gorau ryw  
 Post o gwyr o'r awyr yw

High above Mona's isle it stands  
 Fronting the angels  
 A column glowing like purest gold  
 A wall of sky warriors (?)<sup>1</sup>

It is also an historical fact that in Henry's earlier Welsh campaigns the weather fought for Glendower, and that he and his men had an uncanny capacity for concealment, and for appearing to vanish from the face of the earth when the English forces entered the country. These facts might well lead our countryman to suggest to Shakespeare that after all Glendower may have known more of nature's secrets than ordinary men. But he would have added, “There is no authority for connecting him with your outrageous skimble skamble stuff, or the wild superstitious elements you have made a part of his character”.

The Welsh view of the real Glendower may thus be summed up: Glendower was a country squire, a gentleman of position and worth, a well-read man, and probably knowing something of the motion of the heavenly bodies, but certainly knowing much of nature and how her moods, in fog, mist, and rain, might assist the concealment of himself and his men; brave as a lion; *cyweithgael coeth* (of refined affability); and generous almost beyond words.

Here we have the real Glendower, and we find no trace of such a portrait in any of the English chronicles, or other English authority available to Shakespeare; and up to the point at which we have arrived Shakespeare himself shows no such man, nor the ghost of such a man.

Now we must picture Shakespeare, when he had left our imaginary countryman, taking up his pen again to

<sup>1</sup> This line is clearly a mis-translation.—V.E.

continue the interrupted scene. What would he write? These are his very next words :

“ In faith, he is a worthy gentleman,  
Exceedingly well read, and profited  
In strange concealments ; valiant as a lion,  
And wondrous affable, and as bountiful  
As mines of India.”

With one flash of genius looking into the well of truth, and with one stroke of his pen, he gives us the real Glendower, who cannot be reconciled with or brought into the same canvas as the Glendower of the first part of the scene. The butt of the stage and the sport of the pit is now a worthy gentleman. You see he puts the words “ worthy gentleman ” in the very foreground of his picture. This phrase is also used of Macbeth at the beginning of the play when his honour shone bright and when Duncan fitly termed him valiant and noble ; the word with Shakespeare connoted loyalty and a real greatness of soul. Indeed it marks a complete severance from all the elements of ill-bred, vaunting and contemptible traits in the character of Shakespeare’s earlier, or English, Glendower.

From this point to the end of the scene, although Hotspur and Glendower are on the stage together until its close, you find no ridicule. Glendower is no longer the whetstone for Hotspur’s humour, but becomes the means whereby Hotspur is chastened by both Mortimer and Worcester for his lack of manners, and vulgar, haughty disdain. The human element in Glendower is at once stressed ; his affection for his daughter, and his concern for her grief in having to part with her husband Mortimer, is brought into prominence. She speaks four times in Welsh, and her Welsh is described as being

“ as sweet as ditties highly penned,  
Sung by a fair queen in a summer’s bower,  
With ravishing division, to her lute.”

In order not to irritate his audience with too much Welsh which the majority would not understand, and to add to the realism of the scene, Shakespeare, you will find, makes Glendower translate some of her words, and these go to show what worlds we are away from the earlier Glendower.

It has been said, and truly, that there is very little great poetry in the play of *1 Henry IV*. Of this little, the most musically poetical are the lines given by Glendower as a translation of the Welsh spoken by his daughter to her husband Mortimer :

“She bids you  
 On the wanton rushes lay you down  
 And rest your gentle head upon her lap,  
 And she will sing the song that pleaseth you,  
 And on your eyelids crown the god of sleep,  
 Charming your blood with pleasing heaviness,  
 Making such difference 'twixt wake and sleep  
 As is the difference betwixt day and night  
 The hour before the heavenly-harness'd team  
 Begins his golden progress in the east.”

Now, the introduction of this speech into the play is just one of those little matters through which, as Goethe says, we discover Shakespeare's greatness. He is here dealing with a curious and unusual situation, unique and almost impossible dramatically—a wife who speaks no English, and a husband who speaks no Welsh. Glendower, the lady's father, however, speaks English, as he is made to say, as well as Hotspur. Yet, in spite of the father's knowledge of English, Shakespeare accentuates the fact that the daughter only knows Welsh ; when this, except for her tears and the soul of music in her, makes her dramatically a mere incumbrance. Why has he done this ? He did not introduce such a complicated situation merely for the purpose of delighting his audience with a

Welsh song. He must have been influenced by his knowledge of the inability of persons who had never left Wales to speak English even in his own day.<sup>1</sup>

His portrayal of Fluellen and Sir Hugh Evans shows he was aware that English could only be spoken "in Welsh garb", even by persons who had the advantage of living many years in England. Glendower's daughter would be monoglot Welsh, unless she had some knowledge of Latin; and to make her speak English would be a glaring incongruity which Shakespeare instinctively avoided, while any use of the uncouth Welsh-English of Sir Hugh and Fluellen would reduce the scene to bathos. It is but a little matter, yet it shows how careful he began to be in dealing with his Welsh characters, in order to create a true local colouring. And it can be shown that this is invariably the case when he deals with these characters in his play.

There still remains an interesting feature to be noticed in this speech of Glendower's daughter, beginning with "She bids you". Coleridge knocked at the door of its mystery, but got no further. He noticed the line,

*Glen.*: "Nay, if you melt, then will she run mad."

and says,

"This 'nay' so to be dwelt on in speaking as to be equivalent to a dissyllable -u is characteristic of the solemn Glendower: but the imperfect line

*'She bids you*

*Upon the wanton rushes lay you down,' etc.*

is one of those fine hair-strokes of exquisite judgment peculiar to Shakespeare, thus detaching the lady's speech, and giving it the individuality and entireness of a little poem, while he draws attention to it." (*Lectures on Shakespeare*, ed. 1893, p. 269.)

---

<sup>1</sup> As late as the eighteenth century John Wesley found that the family with whom he stayed at Conway did not understand English and could not join with him in prayer after supper.

Coleridge was struck with this exquisite "little poem" coming as it does in the midst of speeches and dialogue which are not poetical in any real sense. Shakespeare gives them as a *translation* of words used by a Welsh girl, and, as Coleridge notes, draws attention to them by a broken line, as printed in the first Folio. They breathe a spirit which is not expressed anywhere else in the play. No Welshman versed in the poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym, the great Welsh troubadour poet of Glendower's age, could read these lines carefully without being struck by their wonderful similarity, in feeling and expression, to the Welsh poet's words. For example, if we take one of Ap Gwilym's odes to Morfudd, one of his several passions, we find, that after a description of her forehead as having the beauty of a daisy, of her hair as a shower of gold, of her smile as being like the Virgin's five holy joys, he proceeds :

"Dy deced! dyred hyd allt;  
 Bid ein gwely fry'n y fron  
 Bedeiroes mewn bedw irion,  
 Ar fatras o ddail glas glyn,  
 A ridens mân o redyn."

How fair thou art! To the hillside come;  
 And on its brow let our couch remain,  
 For ages long in a green birch grove,  
 On fresh press'd leaves from the vale below,  
 Fring'd all around with dainty fern.

A little further on in the same ode he says :

"Minau a wnaf o'm anerch  
 Salmau o gusanau serch;  
 Saith gusan gan rianedd . . .  
 Saith osber, saith offeren  
 Saith araith bronfraith ar bren . . .  
 Clo ar gariad taladwy,  
 Ni ddyly hi i mi mwy."

And I shall greet thee there  
 With psalms of kisses sweet,

Seven kisses as from holy nun,  
 Seven vesper songs and masses seven,  
 Seven melodies that thrushes sing,  
 Seven accents of the free-born muse,  
 Seven odes to Morfudd's grace ;  
 And ne'er again shall barriers stand  
 Between my love and thine.

Now, this is not Shakespeare's manner, nor what Shakespeare would have created had he been minded to use these consummately poetical images and similes of Dafydd ap Gwilym. These crisp and silvery-toned lines defy adequate translation, but ap Gwilym cannot expand and embroider a metaphor as Shakespeare can. He does not see the whole world, as Shakespeare does, or, indeed, see even his own country. Ap Gwilym only sees what his eyes rest on and his heart beats for ; but, in describing visions which shafts of light disclose, his art is as perfect and distinctive as Shakespeare's own ; and in this Welsh girl's speech Shakespeare gives us a sudden flash-light glimpse of two lovers in a trance of love, as ap Gwilym so often does.

When comparing these extracts from the two poets we must bear in mind that in one case a woman speaks, and in the other, a man ; yet they have the following elements in common. They both invite their loves to rest on nature's couch ; they invite to sleep ; they promise the charm of music ; and, while they have the same delicate sense which enables them to avoid voluptuousness, the feeling of love is borne along on the same high plane of strongly expressed devotion. The remainder in both is the individual poet, and none other.

No one will question the high probability that if a glimpse of such Welsh poetry had been afforded to Shakespeare, he would have incorporated its spirit into this scene. And he has done so.

One question remains to be asked. Did Shakespeare himself appreciate that he had thus introduced into this scene two utterly inconsistent conceptions of Glendower? He evidently did; and to save himself the trouble of re-writing the earlier portion, he gives us an example of his consummate stage craft and of his genius as a playwright. Without severing himself entirely from the magic element in Glendower, he discards every gross, impossible, and ridiculous feature, but retains and uses the well-known form of stage magic, in the guise of distant music, worked so elaborately in *The Tempest*. Glendower had said his daughter would sing, but before she does, the instruments play:

“those musicians that shall play to you  
Hang in the air a thousand leagues from hence,  
And straight they shall be here.”

This is not magic, but the old device of distant music made to approach by slowly opening the door of the adjoining room where the musicians are. An Elizabethan audience would not think this magic, for the suggestion of magic, when recognised as a stage device, melts away in the actual living delight of the real music. Glendower's daughter then sings her Welsh song, with the result that even Hotspur, who had shortly before said he had rather hear a kitten mew, and a dog howl, than listen to music, was so entranced that he even implores his own wife to sing. Hotspur has ceased to scoff, all recollection of the former credulous, half mad, wild and rude Glendower is blotted out, and the audience is left thinking only of a refined, artistic and sensitive woman who adores her husband, and an affectionate father, lion-hearted, cultured and bountiful as mines of India—in faith, a worthy gentleman.

## GLENDDOWER IN THE REST OF THE PLAY.

Glendower is not seen again, although he is referred to on four occasions in the remainder of the play. Hotspur, when he knew the crisis of his fate was approaching and that the battle of Shrewsbury would be won or lost before Glendower could arrive, pays him the greatest compliment one brave man can pay to another by saying :

“O that Glendower were come !”

and

“My father and Glendower being both away  
 . . . . .  
 Doomsday is near ; die all, die merrily.”

Shakespeare was not thinking of the man who bragged of his power to call spirits from the vasty deep, and who was mocked by Hotspur because he could not tell the truth and shame the devil. The scorn and ridicule have passed into highest appreciation.

The next reference, however, needs some consideration. The Archbishop of York, one of Hotspur's co-conspirators, discussing the possibilities of the coming battle, says :

“And what with Owen Glendower's absence thence,  
 Who with them was a rated sinew too  
 And comes not in, o'er-ruled by prophecies,  
 I fear the power of Percy is too weak  
 To wage an instant trial with the King.”

This, it may be suggested, shows a relapse, in one respect, into the earlier conception of Glendower ; and it is the only one which can be suggested. But we should, as Coleridge warns us, always be careful not to take our estimate of a character from the mouth of another only. To ascertain Shakespeare's conception we have to satisfy ourselves of the general impression which he intended to produce upon his audience. The Archbishop was full of a despondency which Shakespeare was emphasizing. He

is not brought into personal contact with Glendower, and as his knowledge was based upon mere rumour, the reference to prophecies by him was true to nature, as expressing the popular view of his own day. But to make it clear that Shakespeare did not intend us to believe that it was the superstitious influence of prophecies which kept Glendower from Shrewsbury, he makes Vernon report to Hotspur :

“I learn'd in Worcester, as I rode along,  
He cannot draw his power this fourteen days.”

It was Vernon's answer to Hotspur's anxious cry, ‘O that Glendower were come!’ And the fact that, in such a crisis, even Hotspur himself refrains from associating spirits or prophecies with Glendower, shows that Shakespeare never deviated one hair's breadth from his second and true conception of the man. It is, indeed upon this Glendower that Shakespeare's eyes were fixed, when in writing the last lines of this play, he makes King Henry say :

“Myself and you, son Harry, will towards Wales  
To fight with Glendower and the Earl of March.”

Shakespeare, it is worth noting, leaves Glendower in the obscurity which veiled the end of the real man. He is only mentioned once again by him, in *2 Henry IV*, Act 3, Sc. 1, when the King was ill and his death was near.

“To comfort you the more, I have received  
A certain instance that Glendower is dead :  
Your majesty hath been this fortnight ill.”

It was a false rumour : Glendower, as already pointed out, out-lived him ;

“from Rumour's tongues  
They bring smooth comforts false, worse than true wrongs,”  
as Shakespeare says ; and he preserves the mystery which surrounds great Glendower's death.

To conclude. It has been said that a critic must exer-

cise great caution or he may find what he is in search of. I did not search for the result arrived at in this paper. I laboured indeed abundantly to try to harmonize Shakespeare's references to Glendower, endeavouring to find a consistent portrait, and even started to write a paper on such lines. It collapsed of its own lack of foundation, and I believe the secret of the difficulty is revealed. Others must judge for themselves whether any alternative to the explanation offered is possible. If for the purpose of character study, we jettison the first and spurious Glendower as mere sport for the gallery, based upon the commonplace English conception of the man, which was originally Shakespeare's own, we are left with Glendower and his daughter as the principal figures of a scene whose prevailing note has a strong undertone of melancholy, which dies away into silence.

This harmonizes with Glendower's life. He risked all, and lost all. He lived to see his brother Tudor die in battle, his son Griffith taken captive, his wife and his daughter, whose 'Welsh was sweet as ditties highly penn'd', and her three daughters pass into a captivity from which they never returned. He was left alone. Glendower's dreams were shattered in the utter wreck of Wales, which became a nightmare of desolation after ten years of constant fighting. But he deserved the noble epitaph which the genius of Shakespeare penned for his future monument—"a worthy gentleman".

"Anoeth bydd bedd i Arthur"—unknown is the grave of Arthur—and no one knows where 'great Glendower' lies. It would have marred the epic of his life to have known the manner of its close; for the glory of such a life was its struggle, and its most fitting shroud is the glamour of silence.

## NOTE : IN MEMORIAM.

---

Arthur Hughes, the writer of the foregoing paper, died early in 1918 as the result of an accident. The paper is published exactly as he left it. Had he survived, it would no doubt have received some further revision, which might have modified or removed several points that appear to be open to criticism. As was pointed out at the meeting, when the paper was read (after Mr. Hughes' death), it would be easy to exercise this task, and improve the argument, but out of respect to the memory of the writer it was decided to publish the paper as it was left by him. It remains only to add that it was Mr. Hughes' intention to devote what leisure was left to him by the calls of a busy legal life, to a further study of the Welsh characters in Shakespeare. In particular he proposed to deal with *Fluellen* (see p. 5) and *Sir Hugh Evans*. Unfortunately, the accident that deprived him of life, left the intention unfulfilled. In the study of Shakespeare's treatment of *Glendower* he was greatly encouraged and assisted by the affectionate collaboration of Mrs. Arthur Hughes, to whom the Society is indebted for permission to publish this paper. . . Arthur Hughes was a younger son of the late Robert Hughes of Aber Llefeni, Merionethshire. After graduating at Cambridge, he joined Gray's Inn, and was called to the Bar. During the War in the Transvaal, he and his brother, the late Professor Alfred Hughes, were largely instrumental in forming and maintaining the Welsh Hospital sent to South Africa. He was for many years a member of the Council of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, and some of his studies have previously appeared in the Society's Magazine.—V.E.

---

















